

# Office of Animal Welfare Hosts Training on Emergency Sheltering for Companion Animals



AHA Trainor Jeff Eyre and his companion Dually lead classroom discussion on Day 1.

DOVER – When severe weather forces people to leave their homes, no one wants to leave their pets behind. While emergency shelters used to refuse to accommodate companion animals, in recent years people are urged to take their pets with them. After Hurricane Katrina emergency agencies began to include pets in evacuation and emergency shelter plans. To ensure there is a place in Delaware shelters for pets, the Office of Animal Welfare’s Delaware Animal Response (DAR) program hosted an interactive, two-day training on how to set up emergency shelters for companion animals. The approximately 30 attendees are volunteers for the State Animal Response Team (SART), including animal rescuers, veterinarians or veterinary technicians, animal control officers, and members of the public who have an interest in disaster preparedness and response.

“When disaster strikes, we need to ensure safe shelter for both people and animals,” said Hetti Brown, Executive Director of the Office of Animal Welfare. “Through the engagement of a

highly trained team of volunteers, we can provide a network of safe shelters across the state.”

The training provided attendees with skills for the planning and implementation of emergency shelters for companion animals during and after a disaster, whether at the local or national level. Topics included the identification, design, and set-up of emergency animal shelters; differences between temporary and co-location shelters; public information officer and media relations skills and duties; daily routines in the care of animals; creating a volunteer plan and managing volunteers during a disaster; and decontamination and demobilization of shelters.

“These trained volunteers will now have the skills to provide the critical management and staffing support necessary to set up and run successful animal emergency shelters during times of extreme need,” said Program Coordinator P. Jane Walmsley.



Students learn how to set up a medical area in an animal shelter.

The training, which was funded through a federal grant, was provided by the American Humane Association (AHA), which hosts disaster preparedness trainings nationwide for animal welfare professionals.

The Division of Public Health’s Office of Animal Welfare, which manages the DAR program, was created to protect the health, safety, and welfare of companion animals, and promote the human-animal bond in Delaware. The office assumed

responsibility for animal response in 2014 and immediately started to put together a plan for volunteer recruitment and training. Today, the program has more than 100 volunteers statewide.

For more information or to apply to become a State Animal Response Team volunteer, call 302-255-4628 or email [p.jane.walmsley@delaware.gov](mailto:p.jane.walmsley@delaware.gov).

And, to prepare your pet for an emergency evacuation:

- Identify evacuation options for your pets in advance, such as family and friends outside your area who are willing to take in you or your pets, pet-friendly hotels in the region, and boarding or veterinary facilities for your pets.
- Have a pet preparedness kit, which should include: a collar with ID tags and leash or harness; pet food and water (for at least three days but preferably a week); medications and a first aid kit; important documents in a plastic bag, including medical and vaccination records, license and microchip numbers, and any special instructions for your pet; current photos of you with your pet; a transport crate or carrier; bedding and toys; and sanitation supplies such as waste bags, litter and box, paper towels, and cleaner.

For further information on how to prepare your pet for an emergency, visit the [Humane Society of the United States](#), or [click here](#) for the ASPCA's website.

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>. Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and*

protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.